

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 7

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

TO PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION REPRESENTING THE STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

We, your Memorialists, the House of Representatives and the Senate of the State of Idaho assembled in the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-first Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

WHEREAS, on May 15, 2005, Idaho native Army Sergeant Chris Tschida and the three crew members of his tank were patrolling route "Michigan" between Ramadi and Fallujah in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq while conducting operations under Operation Iraqi Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Tschida, along with his loader, were standing watch in the gun turret, watching for enemy activity while the tank driver and a Lieutenant were inside the tank preparing for a mission later that night. The loader shifted his body and accidentally knocked his water bottle down inside the tank and while lowering himself inside the tank to pick up the water, an insurgent used the opportunity to attack by throwing two enemy grenades inside the tank; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Tschida could hear the grenades fall in the tank and instantly found one, yelling "grenade!" to his crew members while retrieving one grenade to put into the tank's breach to absorb the blast. In this process, the grenade exploded and amputated Sgt. Tschida's left hand. Moments later the second grenade exploded inside the tank, severely wounding Sgt. Tschida and two of the other crew members; and

WHEREAS, still conscious, Sgt. Tschida began assessing the damage inside the tank, but was unable to see because of the smoke and fire caused by the grenade. Sgt. Tschida attempted to key the microphone on his radio to call for support and report the enemy attack when he noticed his left hand was missing. Sgt. Tschida wrapped the stump of his hand into his shirt and began checking the status of his tank and fellow soldiers. At first glance Sgt. Tschida saw his Lieutenant slumped over and unconscious with his head resting on the .50 caliber sight. The Lieutenant was bleeding heavily from his eye socket and appeared to be dead; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Tschida then noticed his loader, hanging half-way out of the tank's turret, missing both legs from the knees down. Sgt. Tschida shook his Lieutenant to see if he was alive, at which time the Lieutenant let out a gasp of air that confirmed he was not dead; and

WHEREAS, an evaluation of the tank also confirmed the ammunition bay had been busted open from the grenade blast and the tank ammunition was at risk of catching fire and exploding. Knowing he and his fellow soldiers were not safe inside the tank, Sgt. Tschida pulled himself out of the hatch and then began pulling his loader out of the tank. Once his loader was safely out

1 of the tank, Sgt. Tschida began pulling his Lieutenant out of the commander's hatch of the tank. Once both soldiers were safely out of the tank, Sgt. Tschida began administering first aid by tying a tourniquet on both of the loader's legs and by stuffing a field bandage inside of the eye socket of the Lieutenant to stop the bleeding from his head; and

6 WHEREAS, while caring for both soldiers, Sgt. Tschida did a security check of his area. At this time an enemy insurgent, believed to be the one who attacked Sgt. Tschida's tank, engaged Sgt. Tschida while he was administering first aid to his fellow soldiers. Sgt. Tschida was able to repel the enemy assault with his M9 service pistol, killing the hostile force; and

11 WHEREAS, knowing they were in imminent danger, Sgt. Tschida attempted to get the driver of the tank to respond to his commands, but the soldier was in shock and unresponsive. After beating on the hatch and pleading with the driver to respond, the driver opened the driver's hatch and began receiving commands from Sgt. Tschida. At this time, Sgt. Tschida commanded the driver to return them and the tank with its munitions back to the nearest security gate to get help. Sgt. Tschida then shielded both soldiers with his body on the surface of the tank until they arrived at a safe location; and

19 WHEREAS, all four crew members, including Sgt. Tschida, survived the injuries they sustained on May 15, 2005, and the tank was returned and repaired for future use. To this day, Sgt. Chris Tschida has not received recognition or accolades for his heroism and steadfast leadership on May 15, 2005.

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-first Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we urge President Barack Obama, in the name of Congress, to award Retired Sergeant Chris Tschida the Medal of Honor for distinguishing himself through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, or the highest appropriate recognition.

31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to President Barack Obama, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.